

People, Process, Communications

By Col. William Bayles, District Engineer

Last month, I started sharing a few thoughts about the Chief of Engineers' strategic vision and to outline some future directions for us.

This month, I'll focus on the second leg of Lt. Gen. Flowers' vision -- process.

Process. I have told many of you that I want you to have the correct or most effective tools to do your job, and I mean that. One of the tools you need is training. Another tool is a set process for what we do every day. Most of our processes are in peoples' heads (How many times have you heard, 'We've always done it this way'). These work well until the person with the head retires or goes on leave, and his or her co-workers have to figure out how to do a job from scratch. With our Quality Management Program, we are documenting many of our processes. But I want anyone who can come up with a better process, or thinks of a way of saving money or time, to do it.

Some will say that formal processes limit people's creativity. I prefer to look on formal processes as enabling creativity. Here's how. Having formal processes to accomplish the things we do routinely enables us to focus our creativity on the non-routine things, or they enable us to focus our creativity on modifying the processes to fit a new condition.

Documenting our processes provides other benefits as well. These aid experienced employees by providing checklists to ensure important steps are included, as well as providing a training template for less-experienced employees.

Finally, established processes ensure we do the same things the same way each time. This enables us to provide a consistent quality product. We will be able to measure our costs, our quality inputs, and provide higher quality products to our customers at less cost.



Carefully documenting our business processes will not occur overnight. I anticipate our Quality Management Program will be several years in the making. Nevertheless, as we build it, I anticipate we will increasingly ask, "How did we ever function without this?"

I believe our efforts at formalizing our business and support processes will support Lt. Gen. Flowers' goal of being the world's premier engineering institution. ■

On May 1, the nation will again celebrate Law Day, an annual observance, established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958 as a means of strengthening the American heritage of liberty, justice and equality under the law. The celebration provides an opportunity to help students and the public understand how the law protects their freedoms. More than just a single day to reflect on this nation's legal heritage, Law Day is a call to action that often encompasses weeks of programs and activities conducted by schools, bar associations, courts, and civic groups.

In 1961, the first of May was set aside by Joint Resolution of Congress as a "special day of celebration by the American people in appreciation of their liberties and the reaffirmation of their loyalty to the United States of America," and as an occasion for "rededication to the ideals of equality and justice under laws."

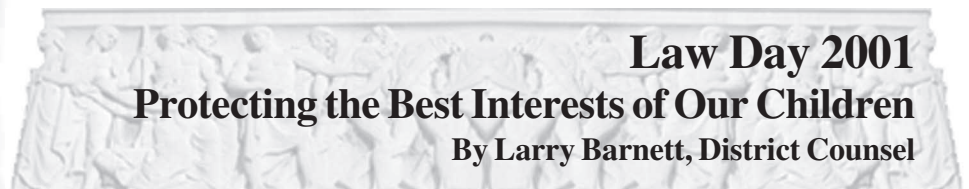
In the past few years, the American Bar Association, as the national professional association of American lawyers, has chosen a central theme for each year's Law Day activities.

This year's theme is "Celebrate Your Freedom: Protecting the Best Interests of Our Children." Over the past 100 years, American law has endeavored to address the needs of children and their unique status within our legal system. Courts and legislatures have often used "best interests of the child" criteria to help make legal

actions more child-centered. This year, Law Day focuses on how American law related to children continues to develop and how it can better protect the interests of children and promote the well being of their families.

The freedom of America's citizens is sustained by American law. In crafting the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, our nation's founders wisely understood that liberty and law are equally important to ensuring human rights and preserving human dignity. Law without freedom becomes tyranny; freedom without law becomes chaos.

In celebration of Law Day, Office of Counsel will have an open house from 9 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. on May 1. The District's legal staff will be your hosts and will be happy to discuss Rock Island's legal services program and answer any questions you may have. There will also be plenty of snacks available. We hope to see you all there. ■



Law Day 2001

Protecting the Best Interests of Our Children

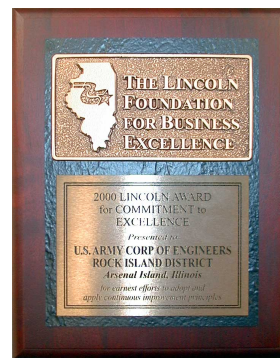
By Larry Barnett, District Counsel



For more information on Law Day 2001
visit the official website at:

www.lawday.org

District Receives Lincoln Foundation Quality Award



The Rock Island District received the Lincoln Award for excellence by the Lincoln Foundation for Business Excellence in ceremonies held March 7 in Chicago. The Corps received the Level I - Commitment to Excellence award for demonstrating an earnest effort to adopt and apply continuous improvement principles.

Nine Illinois organizations received recognition with either The Progress Towards Excellence or Commitment to Excellence award. The Corps joins the list of past Lincoln Award winners, which include Honeywell, Citibank, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois State Police, Black Hawk College, and the Illinois Department of Revenue.

The Lincoln Award is both a rigorous analytic process and a prestigious honor that encourages organizations to achieve their full potential. The Lincoln Award criteria provide a model for continuous improvement to organizations in search of excellence in five sectors: Industry, Service, Health Care, Education, and Government. Applicants are measured against the Foundation's seven criteria of excellence, patterned after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award: Leadership, Strategic Planning, Customer and Market Focus, Information and Analysis, Human Resource Development and Management, Process Management, and Organization Results.

Applicants are scored on their approach to the seven criteria, the deployment of that approach, and the results of those efforts. Three Award levels provide a stair-step approach to excellence:

Level I - Commitment to Excellence is the starting level for organizations that have demonstrated an earnest effort to adopt and apply continuous improvement principles.

Level II - Progress toward Excellence recognizes those organizations that have demonstrated significant progress in instituting sound continuous improvement principles.

Level III - Achievement of Excellence recognizes organizations that have demonstrated exemplary approach, deployment, and results in the overall quality systems and continuous improvement processes.

"Winning the Commitment to Excellence Award has provided us with a framework for permanent and continuous improvement," said Col. Bill Bayles, commander, Rock Island District. "We are committed to implementing key business management processes that will, in turn, lead to a higher degree of business performance and support to the citizens of the Midwest."

Launched in 1995, the Lincoln Awards for Excellence is an initiative of the Lincoln Foundation for Business Excellence in addition to education and outreach initiatives. The foundation is a private sector nonprofit organization whose mission is "to be the key catalyst to help Illinois' organizations achieve excellence."

For more information on the Lincoln Award, please visit their website at: www.lincolnaward.org.



Corps Day 2001

THE CORPS: A PROVEN PAST - A PROUD FUTURE

Thursday, June 14

Arsenal Island, Memorial Field

Mark your calendars!

There will be food, drinks, games, prizes, awards and more!

